

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 NEA-10 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 L-03
EB-07 IO-13 AF-08 INR-07 SSO-00 /088 W
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R 061146Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2053
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 00182

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, EGEN, RH
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND: ITALY

REF: ROME 20633

1. SUMMARY: GOI VIEWS PROPOSED ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND
FAVORABLY BUT HAS REACHED NO DECISION AS YET AND MAY NOT BE
ABLE TO DO SO IN A SHORT TIME-FRAME. END SUMMARY

2. RESPONSIBLE MFA OFFICIAL (RACHELE, OFFICE DIRECTOR FOR
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SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLITICAL AFFAIRS) TOLD EMBOFF TODAY THAT
"IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE HOW ITALY COULD CONSIDER ITSELF
EXTRANEIOUS TO THIS PROGRAM. THE QUESTION, HE SAID ON PERSONAL
BASIS, IS "HOW, NOT WHETHER", TO ARRANGE ITALIAN PARTICIPA-
TION. RACHELE DELIBERATELY STOPPED JUST SHORT OF SAYING
THAT GOI IS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE BUT GAVE EVERY INDICATION THAT
THAT COMMITMENT IS IN THE CARDS.

3. DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED HAVE BEEN STUDIED, AND CONTINUE TO BE STUDIED, AT VARIOUS LEVELS IN GOI. FONMIN FORLANI IS AWARE OF MAJOR PROGRAM DETAILS. GOI IS "SATISFIED WITH THE DEGREE OF ADVANCEMENT IN ELABORATION OF PLAN" WHICH IT ASSESSES AS A "QUITE GOOD AND USEFUL BASIS" FOR DISCUSSIONS, A "VALID AND IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOLUTION OF THE (RHODESIAN) PROBLEM".

4. BECAUSE ITALY IS INVOLVED WITH, AND IS NOT "EXTERNAL TO" ACHIEVEMENT OF A PEACEFUL SOLUTION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, IT HAS BEEN ENGAGED IN LOW-KEY BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH LEADERS IN TANZANIA, MOZAMBIQUE AND ANGOLA, URGING THAT THEY SHOW THEMSELVES TO BE NEITHER EXCESSIVELY RADICAL OR DRASTIC. ITALY WILL BE INTERESTED IN THE ZIMBABWE FUND AS IT IS ELABORATED. RACHELE MENTIONED PARTICULARLY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE AFFECTED ZIMBABWEAN LEADERS PRIOR TO AND AFTER ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANSITION GOVERNMENT, AND UN-RELATED ASPECTS.

5. RACHELE ALSO SAID IT IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT THE FUND WILL BE DISCUSSED IN THE EC-9. THE NEXT POLITICAL DIRECTORS' MEETING WILL LIKELY BE TOO LATE IN JANUARY, VIS-A-VIS RESUMPTION OF THE TALKS IN GENEVA. THERE IS A DISTINCT POSSIBILITY OF AN APPROPRIATE MEETING OF EC AFRICAN EXPERTS BEFOREHAND, ALTHOUGH NONE HAS SO FAR BEEN SCHEDULED.

6. SHIFTING TO THE PROBLEM WITHIN THE GOI, RACHELE SAID FLATLY THAT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A "NEW LAW" TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY FUNDS FOR ITALIAN PARTICIPATION. THIS MIGHT NOT BE CONFIDENTIAL

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BE TOO MUCH OF A PROBLEM SINCE ITS PRESENTATION COULD BE COMBINED WITH PROPOSED REPEAL OF EXTENT ITALIAN LEGISLATION ENFORCING SANCTIONS ON RHODESIA, AND COULD BE CAST IN TERMS OF NORMALIZING TRADE, INVESTMENT AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION.

7. HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE THREATENING STRAW IN THE LEGISLATIVE WINDS. AS OF NOW THE PARLIAMENT HAS REFUSED TO APPROVE THE MFA'S REQUEST FOR CY-77 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUNDS, WHICH COMPRISE A MAJOR ITALIAN BRIDGE TO THE DEVELOPING WORLD. SO FAR, THE PARLIAMENT HAS APPROVED ONLY ABOUT ONE THIRD OF THE TOTAL, AND IT IS NOT CLEAR IF FURTHER AMOUNTS WILL BE APPROVED. IF THE HANDLING OF THIS BILL INDICATES THE MOOD OF PARLIAMENT TOWARDS FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, EVEN A SMALL CONTRIBUTION TO THE ZIMBABWE FUND MIGHT BE DIFFICULT.

8. RACHELE COMMENTED THAT, WHILE IT IS CLEAR THE UK/US PROPOSAL INVOLVED ESSENTIALLY A SERIES OF NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS, IT IS ALTOGETHER POSSIBLE THAT THE EC COMMISSION MIGHT DECIDE TO "INVOLVE ITSELF" WITH ITS OWN RESOURCES" IN THE NAME OF

THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY". RACHELE SAID THE SUGGESTION HAS NOT SO FAR ARISEN, BUT THAT IT DOES HAVE A CERTAIN LOGIC.

9. THE SOLE QUESTION OF SUBSTANCE PUT TO US BY RACHELE PERTAINED TO THE RATIONALE EMPLOYED BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS IN DEVELOPING THE SUGGESTED LEVELS OF CONTRIBUTIONS FROM VARIOUS STATES. HE PRESUMES THERE IS SOME ROUGH FORMULA, MODIFIED BY UNQUANTIFIABLE FACTORS SUCH AS "HISTORIC INTERESTS" IN THE AREA. HE ASKED FOR WHATEVER LIGHT WE CAN THROW ON THIS SUBJECT, PARTICULARLY AS TO HOW THE UN SCALE OF CONTRIBUTIONS MIGHT HAVE BEEN USED, IF IT WERE, IN DEVELOPING THE SUGGESTED LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTIONS.

10. COMMENT: OUR JUDGEMENT, BASED ON FOREGOING VIEW FROM RACHELE, ON UPCOMING TRAVELS OF FONMIN FORLANI, AND ON GENERAL PREOCCUPATION OF GOI LEADERS WITH DOMESTIC PROBLEMS, IS THAT GOI DECISION ON FUND PROPOSAL WILL BE SLOW IN COMING UNLESS
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SOME FORM OF GROUP PRESSURE CREATES THE POSSIBILITY THAT ITALY MIGHT BE LEFT OUT. ITALIAN INSTINCT TO SEEK A COMFORTABLE NICHE IN THE CENTER OF A NINE CONSENSUS WORKS AGAINST AN EARLY UNILATERAL ITALIAN DECISION. OUR CHANCES FOR A POSITIVE ITALIAN RESPONSE WILL BE ENHANCED IF WE CAN REVEAL COMMITMENTS FROM MAJOR DONOR COUNTRIES. VOLPE

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